U.S. Census Bureau
Manufacturing and Construction Division
Residential Construction Branch
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Building Permits Survey
Sample Data and Documentation

This documentation contains the following files:

README.PDF	The file you are now reading.
NEWORDER.PDF	Ordering Information Package - Price lists and order forms for building permit data.
	Order Forms are also available as separate 2-page files form1.PDF, form2.PDF and form3.PDF.
STATEPRT.PDF	Documentation for printouts of building permit data by State, Division, Region and United States total.
MAPRT.PDF	Documentation for printouts of building permit data by Metropolitan Area (MA).
PLACEPRT.PDF	Documentation for printouts of building permit data by individual permit office, with county totals.
STATEASC.PDF	Documentation for ASCII file of building permit data by State.
MSAASC.PDF	Documentation for ASCII file of building permit data by Metropolitan Area (MA).
CNTYASC.PDF	Documentation for ASCII file of building permit data by County.
PLACEASC.PDF	Documentation for ASCII file of building permit data by individual permit office.
ITEMS.PDF	Definitions of codes used for types of construction.
IMPUTE.PDF	Documentation for building permit imputation procedure.

Documentation listed are in the Portable Document Format (PDF). In order to view these files, you will need the Adobe(R) Acrobat(R) Reader which is available for free from the Adobe web site. http://www.adobe.com/.

Sample Data Files:

ST9812C.TXT	Sample current month State estimates file.
ST9812Y.TXT	Sample year-to-date State estimates file.
ST1997A.TXT	Sample annual State estimates file.
MA9812C.TXT	Sample current month MA estimates file.
MA9812Y.TXT	Sample year-to-date MA estimates file.
MA1997A.TXT	Sample annual MA estimates file.
SO9903C.TXT	Sample current month place level file.
SO9903Y.TXT	Sample year-to-date place level file.
SO9903R.TXT	Sample revised cumulative place level file.
SO1998A.TXT	Sample annual place level file.

2000 Forward New Files

CO9909C.TXT	Current month county estimates.
CO9909Y.TXT	Year-to-date county estimates.

The data files are comma delimited ASCII files which contain a header row that identifies the contents of each cell. These files can be imported to most spreadsheets and databases. To allow importing to some packages, the filename extensions are ".txt".

**Detailed Example For Importing Permits Files to Microsoft Excel:

There are many different software packages for file management. For this example, we will use Microsoft Explorer.

Open Microsoft Explorer (should be under Start-Programs - may be known as Windows NT Explorer)

Under the left window, called "All Folders", click once on the C: drive icon. From the pull down menus at the top, click File-New-Folder to create a new folder, and name it C:\Permits.

Put the sample disk we provided in the A: drive. Under "All Folders", double click the A: icon to see all files on this disk. Highlight all files on the sample disk, click in the highlighted area and drag these files to the "C:\Permits" folder.

Double click on the "C:\Permits" folder to see the files now stored on your hard disk.

 If you do not see the filename extensions, such as ".txt", and ".pdf", click on the pull down option "View", select "Options", and click on the box next to "Hide File Extensions" to remove that checkmark and then select "OK".

Run Excel

Click File - Open
Under "Look in" go to the folder, C:\Permits
Next to "Files of Type" select Text Files
Double click the text file you want to open, ST1997A.TXT for this example
Select "Original Data Type" of delimited
Click "Next"
Click Button next to "Comma" for delimiter
Click "Next"
Select FIPS State column and select "Column Data Format" of text (this will allow the table to retain the leading zeros and not change the codes to numbers.)
Click "Finish"

You now have a spreadsheet of 1997 annual building permits by state.

To Import E-mail Permits Files:

From your e-mail message, copy the attached files to the "C:\Permits" directory specified in the preceding section.

Proceed with the Excel instructions